

Through the principle and diligence of William Donaldson, the agency completed the Sarbanes-Oxley rulemaking process, strengthened mutual fund oversight to alleviate potential fraud and abuse in the future, and reinforced the SEC's enforcement and examination programs. During his tenure the SEC hired 1,200 new employees and also promoted teleworking and a virtual workforce. Perhaps most impressively, under Mr. Donaldson's leadership the agency prosecuted more than 1,700 enforcement actions, the two highest annual totals in the SEC's history. During this time the SEC authorized more than \$7 billion in penalties to companies which have not played by the rules.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's financial institutions are stronger and more secure because of the due diligence of William H. Donaldson. I know that my colleagues in the House of Representatives wish him well in his future endeavors. But at this moment and at this time in our country's history he and his staff have made a great contribution.

TO WELCOME HIS EXCELLENCY
PHAN VAN KHAI, PRIME MINISTER OF VIETNAM

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, as the Republican Chairman of the U.S.-Vietnam Caucus here in the House, I rise today to welcome His Excellency Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister of Vietnam.

I am delighted to be here to celebrate this historic occasion—the first official visit of the Prime Minister of Vietnam to the United States Capitol here in Washington, DC.

Thirty five years ago I served in Vietnam as a soldier. Two years ago I returned to that country searching for the remains of a fellow soldier from my district, Captain Arnold Holm, who was shot down in Thua Thien Province in 1972. Although we never found his crash site or his remains, the Vietnamese Government and people were extraordinarily generous and helpful as we searched.

And while we did not find the crash site of Captain Holm, we did find something else of great value. We found Americans and Vietnamese of courage, good will and generous spirit who believed the time had come to heal the wounds of war. As Senator JOHN MCCAIN said last night, we found people who were willing to forget the pain of the past and move forward as friends to build a better future for all our people.

When I returned from my visit to Vietnam I joined my friend and colleague LANE EVANS to create the U.S.-Vietnam Caucus. The purpose of this caucus is to build constructive relationships between our two countries; to search for and recover the remains of soldiers of both countries; to develop tourism and trade; to promote educational exchanges; and to build better relations between our people.

Sir Winston Churchill once remarked, "The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty." I am an optimist. While there is much work left to do, today is a day of optimism—a day to celebrate the progress we have made

so far and a day to let that progress encourage us as we walk together towards an even better future.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I rise today in support of the amendment to increase funds by \$10 million to the National Endowment for the Arts and \$5 million to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The value of Federal arts programs lies in their ability to nurture the growth and artistic excellence of thousands of arts organizations and millions of artists throughout the Nation, making a variety of arts—performance, graphic, literature, and media—available to millions of Americans.

The NEA is the Nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art—both new and established—to all 50 States, including rural communities, inner-city neighborhoods, schools, and military bases.

Support for the arts is a critical investment in the economic growth of every community in this country. The nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion annually in economic activity, supports 4.85 million jobs, and returns \$10.5 billion to the Federal government in income taxes.

Minnesota's 4th Congressional District alone is home to over 1,200 arts-related businesses that employ nearly 9,000 people. These businesses range from theaters, arts schools, museums, architecture firms, and advertising agencies. In addition, unnumbered individual and freelance artists call my district their home. I am proud to represent these artists and their families.

I appreciate how the arts deeply enrich Minnesota. The educational, cultural, and economic impact of the arts is very measurable. Not only do 95% of Minnesotans believe that the arts are an important or essential part of the education of Minnesota children, but 67% of Minnesotans have attended an arts activity themselves within the past year. In addition, the arts in Minnesota have over a \$1 billion economic impact annually.

Arts education has also been proven to help students increase cognitive development, inspire creativity, and enhance problem-solving skills. At a time when students are expected to take more high stakes tests, we must support the activities, such as the arts, that encourage their success.

It is with a commitment to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of my district, and of the Nation, that I rise today in support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

RECOGNIZING FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH YOUTH CHOIR—SULPHUR SPRINGS, TX

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to pay tribute to the First Baptist Church Youth Choir in Sulphur Springs, Texas. The choir is made up of 84 high school students. They have traveled to New York City, San Diego, San Francisco, Washington DC, Canada, the Bahamas, Disney World, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Mexico, and this year will be traveling to Ireland. On these trips, the choir performs concerts in areas approved by the city, usually outdoors where anyone who is walking by can stop and listen. While the students are performing, the adult sponsors talk to those who are listening and distribute free Bibles to anyone who asks for one. These high school students have been able to reach the hearts of thousands of people in a variety of places.

The youth choir began in 1981 under the leadership of the Minister of Music of First Baptist Church, Fred Randles, and his wife, Jane. The students meet every Sunday evening for rehearsal. Throughout the year, they perform at church services and at Holiday in the Park at Six Flags over Texas to help them prepare for their summer trip. During the spring, they begin to learn choreography for the songs they sing.

The choir has received certificates of appreciation from four different Presidents, the U.S. Congress, and Disney World Entertainment Industry. They have also been recognized by the Governor of Cozumel, Mexico, and the Bahamas tourist board, and they have had appearances on Good Morning America and The Early Show on CBS.

In addition to performing, the students also participate in a number of ministry activities. In Hawaii, for example, they conducted Vacation Bible School and Sports Camp, worked with people who needed help around their house, helped at homeless missions, and shared the gospel with people who live on the beach.

The First Baptist Church Youth Choir of Sulphur Springs, TX has not only been blessed by the opportunities they have had, but also by the people whom they have met and associated with in their travels, and in turn the choir has been a blessing to their church and to multitudes of people around the world. As they travel to Ireland in July, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing these outstanding young people and commending them for the great work they are doing.

PIERCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE CENTENNIAL

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a historic building in my home district in Wisconsin. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Pierce County Courthouse has served as a grand symbol of law and order to the people of western Wisconsin